



United States Department of Agriculture

Mt. Hood National Forest

Clackamas River Ranger District Fire Update

Wildfires burned over 112,000 acres on the Mt. Hood National Forest in 2020. Over 103,400 of those acres were on the Clackamas River Ranger District from the Riverside, Lionshead, and Beachie Creek Fires. The Forest is now focused on fire recovery work. Many of our severely burned areas will take years to recover, but we're working hard to restore safe access for forest users. Here's a snapshot of the work we continue to focus on this year:

State Highway 224

We are supporting OR Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) in danger tree removal efforts so Highway 224 can re-open and be safe for the public again. Hazards to the public and employees include falling and down trees, falling rocks, and damaged guard rails and asphalt.

Before starting work, the Forest Service and ODOT developed an Environmental Protection Plan that requires multiple assessments for tree removal and resource protections. Phase I of this work addressed the most pressing and immediate dangers, while Phase II concerns the danger these dead and dying trees will present to public safety over the next 5 years.

As of April, ODOT estimated 74,334 trees need to be assessed for potential dangers to the highway. About 15,679 (21%) of that assessment has been completed. Many of the remaining trees are on extremely steep slopes that are unstable and unsafe to access so we know this process is going to take time. While there is no concrete timeline for reopening, ODOT has shared they do not believe the highway will reopen before fall. [Read regular project updates and information from ODOT here.](#)



Forest
Service

Mt. Hood
National Forest

April 2021

Forest Roads and Recreation Sites

Once the Riverside Fire was contained, Forest staff started the work of assessing our forest roads, recreation sites, and administrative sites for danger and hazard trees that pose a threat to human life and safety. There are about 222 miles of road, 16 campgrounds, 22 trails/trailheads, 4 day use sites, 4 boater access points, and dozens of structures around Timber Lake Job Corps and Ripplebrook that were impacted by the Riverside, Lionshead, and Beachie Creek fires. These areas have varying degrees of tree mortality that pose a threat to human life and safety. Some sites were lightly burned and may just involve cleaning up a few fallen limbs, while other recreation sites experienced severe burn intensity and have lost nearly all their trees, several picnic tables, and incinerated signs. Some areas staff haven't been able to access yet due to blocked roads and winter snow. We cannot reopen roads and recreation sites until hazard assessment is completed and all hazards are removed or mitigated.

Only about 1- 3% of the total fire area will have hazard tree mitigations. The vast majority of burned areas will not have danger trees felled as the trees are far enough away from roads, sites, and structures to not be hazardous to people. Danger tree removal will only take place where fire-killed and weakened trees pose a safety risk to the public and/or forest employees or infrastructure. Where trees are felled, some danger trees may be sold commercially to enable the Forest to



[Dead Western cedar and bigleaf maple at Sandstone Boat Access Site](#)

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pay for danger tree work. Other trees may be felled for personal use firewood gathering, removed to support on-forest or partner restoration projects, or felled and left on site for habitat. Cutting danger trees allows a fire-impacted area to be reopened to public access.

A closed area will not be reopened if hazard or danger trees pose a safety threat to the public.

[Hear from Mt. Hood foresters about assessing fire-damaged trees in this video!](#)



Critical health and safety issues

The fire perimeters and all recreation sites within them will remain closed to the public until we are able to fully assess and mitigate the safety hazards present. Areas outside of the fire perimeters will be closed to motor vehicle traffic until at least May 27. We are working to install gates, barriers, and/or warning signs around the fire perimeter access points so we can reopen some of these areas that were not impacted by the fire. Additionally, we hope to have some areas



[Entrance to Lazy Bend Campground along Hwy 224](#)

that can be accessed by other routes other than Highway 224 assessed by early to mid-summer.

It is important to respect closure areas for your safety and the

safety of those employees and contractors conducting work within the fire area. Potential hazards include falling trees and limbs, falling rocks, unstable ground, damaged roads, landslides, debris flows, and exposure to potentially toxic materials (hazmat).

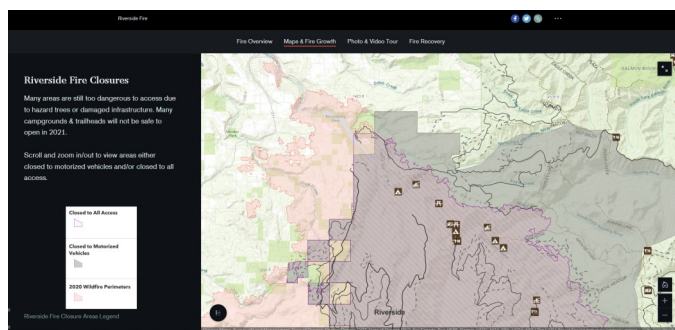
For current closure maps and updates visit:
www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/2020fires

Status of the Riverside Fire and smoke

The Riverside Fire was deemed “controlled” in February 2021. Controlled means that the fire is extinguished within the fire perimeter and not expected to spread. However, there are likely stumps and roots still smoldering and some of those could put out smoke over the coming months. While this is normal, fire staff monitor these “smokes” to make sure they stay put and don’t spread into unburned areas.

Riverside Fire Story Map

Find interactive maps, photos, videos, and info about the Riverside Fire and the road to fire recovery that with this story map: <https://arcg.is/1GamHS>



More information:

Mt. Hood National Forest: www.fs.usda.gov/mthood
Mt. Hood on Facebook: www.facebook.com/mthoodnf
Mt. Hood on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mthoodnf>
Mt. Hood 2020 Wildfires Info:
www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/2020fires